United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1304
7 January 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, tells press conference that he could not accept provincial map of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as proposed in Geneva, because it "legitimized fruits of ethnic cleansing and prevented return of refugees to their homes".

+ In Cairo, Secretary-General holds meetings with Egyptian President, Foreign Minister of Libya; Special Representative for Middle East talks, Chinmaya Gharekhan, travels to Jerusalem for meetings with Israeli ministers.

+ Security Council refers application by Slovak and Czech Republics for United Nations membership to Committee on Admission of New Members, which meets this afternoon.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative to Cambodia signs directive establishing procedures for prosecution of persons responsible for human rights violations in Cambodia, says UNTAC Spokesman; UNTAC empowered to indict individuals and prosecute cases using legal system of appropriate existing administrative structure.

+ Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden to send 700-man joint Nordic battalion to Macedonia under command of extended UNPROFOR operation there, at request of Secretary-General.

+ Last year, Security Council held total of 129 meetings on subjects ranging from situation in ex-Yugoslavia, Somalia and Angola, to admission of 13 new Member States; also held first ever Council Summit on new role of Organization in peace and security.

+ Council of International Civil Aviation Organization to complete fact-finding investigation regarding shooting down of Korean aircraft in August 1983.

* * *

(more)

The President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, at a press conference this morning at Headquarters, said the reason why he could not accept the terms of talks in Geneva last week was that the provincial map of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as proposed by Mr. Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, "legitimized the fruits of ethnic cleansing and prevented the return of refugees to their homes".

Mr. Izetbegovic, who plans to meet with the President of the Security Council this afternoon to discuss the talks in Geneva, said the issue in Geneva was whether "Belgrade's proxies in Bosnia and Herzegovina" were ready to accept the territorial integrity and sovereignty of his country and were willing to recognize and accept it as an independent and sovereign state.

Mr. Izetbegovic also said that ultimately the cornerstone of a lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina would rest on an element of justice and punishment of those responsible for the genocide and crimes against humanity. These were the critical issues which would bring peace, a return to normalcy and reconciliation in the country.

* * *

In Cairo today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak with whom he discussed the situation in the Horn of Africa. He also had a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Libya during which they discussed matters relating to the Security Council sanctions against that country.

Last night, the Secretary-General met with his Special Representative for the Middle East talks, Chinmaya Gharekhan, for a discussion of the framework in which his meetings in Israel would take place. Mr. Gharekhan left Cairo earlier today and was scheduled to meet in Jerusalem with the Israeli Foreign Minister Peres and with Prime Minister Rabin.

The Secretary-General was in Cairo today, before leaving tomorrow for Paris for a private visit. He is scheduled to go then to Bonn for an official visit and return to Paris for the signing of the opening of the Chemical Weapons Treaty. Mr. Boutros-Ghali is expected back in New York on 16 January.

* * *

The Security Council, in two brief meetings today, decided to refer the applications by the Slovak and the Czech Republics for United Nations membership to the Committee on Admission of New Members. The Council recommended that the Committee meet this afternoon to make its recommendations to the General Assembly.

The President of the Security Council, Yoshio Hatano (Japan), presided over the meeting.

According to a United Nations spokesman, the General Assembly is expected to take up the matter in mid-January, pending approval by the Committee.

(more)

* * *

Secretary-General's Special Representative to Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, has signed a directive establishing procedures for the prosecution of persons responsible for human rights violations in Cambodia. The directive empowers the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to indict individuals and prosecute cases using the legal system of the appropriate existing administrative structure, the Spokesman for UNTAC said today.

Under the terms of the new directive, he said, UNTAC could exercise direct control or supervision of administrative agencies, bodies and offices to ensure the maintenance of law and order, law enforcement, judicial processes, and the protection of human rights.

The Spokesman went on to say that UNTAC would review investigations of politically-motivated acts of violence, ethnic killings or any other crime for which justice would not have been served. In cases where sufficient evidence existed, the Special Representative would be able to delegate powers of arrest and detention to United Nations military and police officers, who would be able to secure the imprisonment of the suspects, he added.

The new measure, signed today by Mr. Akashi, would become operational in the next few days. Several cases were already under review and UNTAC expected to be in a position to present them to the courts for prosecution shortly, the Spokesman said.

* * *

Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have decided to send a 700-man joint Nordic battalion to Macedonia to be under the command of the extended United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) there. According to a press release issued by the Finnish Mission to the United Nations today, this action followed a request by the Secretary-General.

While this was the first time that the United Nations was deploying peace-keeping troops in order to prevent the potential eruption of a conflict, the press release said, the concept of preventive deployment of peace-keeping forces had been consistently advocated by the Nordic countries. The operation in Macedonia was an important innovation for the United Nations as well as for the Nordic countries, said the document.

* * *

The Security Council held a total of 129 meetings during 1992 on subjects ranging from the situation in the war-torn ex-Yugoslav republics, in Somalia and Angola, to the admission of 13 new Member States, most of them former Soviet republics. The Council also held its first ever Summit on the new role of the United Nations in peace and security.

Peace-keeping continued to be a major preoccupation of the Council in 1992, with the launch of the largest peace-keeping operation in United Nations

(more)

* * *

history -- the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). That operation is part of a $1.9 billion plan to oversee Cambodia's peaceful transition to democracy.

The Council also authorized a United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) to help create the necessary conditions for the negotiation of an overall settlement to the Yugoslav crisis. The arms embargo against Yugoslavia was expanded to include a trade and air embargo and a suspension of sports and cultural contacts. That measure was further tightened when the Council urged all States to halt maritime shipping to ensure the strict implementation of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

In Somalia, United Nations peace-keepers were authorized by the Council in April to facilitate the immediate cessation of hostilities so that urgently needed humanitarian assistance could reach hundreds of thousands of starving Somalis. In December, the Council allowed for the use of "all necessary means" to create a secure environment for the delivery of such humanitarian assistance. In close cooperation with the United States military, the Unified Task Force was created to prevent fighting Somali factions from prolonging the humanitarian crisis.

Also in December, the Council approved the establishment of the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) to assist that country in implementing a general peace agreement and transition to democracy.

* * *

Following a request by the Governments of Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and United States, the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has decided to complete the fact-finding investigation, which the Agency initiated in 1983, regarding the shooting down of Korean Airlines flight KAL 007 on 31 August 1983.

According to a statement issued by ICAO's headquarters in Montréal, the Council instructed Agency's Secretary-General, Dr. Philippe Rochat, to request all parties involved to cooperate fully in turning over to ICAO, as soon as possible, all relevant materials, including the originals of the cockpit voice recorder and digital flight data recorder tapes.

Agency's Secretary-General was also instructed to undertake the fact-finding investigation on an urgent basis, including the analysis of the originals of the tapes and to report back to the ICAO Council as soon as possible, the statement added.

* *** *

1630P